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FEIS for Gateway West Transmission Line to be available for Public Review

BLM considering phased decision making to allow additional public comment and consideration for siting some segments

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) analyzing the proposed Gateway West transmission line between Wyoming and Idaho Bureau will be published in the Federal Register April 26, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today.

The Gateway West project, proposed by Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power, would strengthen the Western grid to meet the area's projected growth in electricity demand by constructing nearly 990 miles of high voltage transmission lines across southern Wyoming and southern Idaho and adding between 1,500 and 3,000 megawatts (MW) of transmission capacity. The lines would originate at the proposed Windstar substation near Glenrock, Wyoming, and terminate at the Hemingway substation near Melba, Idaho, about 20 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho.

The FEIS responds to comments received on the draft EIS and agency-preferred alternative by making clarifications and changing some segment routes. The FEIS also explains that the BLM is considering a phased decision for this project, which would allow for approval of certain segments of the project while providing an opportunity for various Federal, State and local permitting agencies to collaborate on final siting for one or more other segments.

Potential phased decisions could only occur for segments that have independent utility – those portions of the entire proposed line that could be built and put into service regardless of later decisions on other segments. If the BLM chooses to approve only a portion of the project in an initial decision, this would not preclude the agency's ability to choose the "No Action" alternative for the remainder of the project. It is expected that segments located in Wyoming will be reviewed first.

"The transmission line, if approved, would help support a clean energy economy by bringing a diversified portfolio of renewable and conventional energy to the grid," said BLM Wyoming State Director Don Simpson.

The public can review and comment on the FEIS for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project until Friday, June 28, 2013. The availability of the FEIS also initiates a 30-day protest period on the proposed land use plan amendments associated with the proposed project, which closes on Tuesday, May 28, 2013.

Comments on the FEIS may be made to the BLM via the project website at: www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/cfodocs/gateway_west, via the project e-mail address (Gateway_West_WYMail@blm.gov) or in writing to BLM, Gateway West Project, P.O. Box 20879, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

The BLM will also hold a series of open house public meetings during the public comment period, which will end June 28. Meetings will be held in Idaho and Wyoming as follows:

Gateway West FEIS Open House Public Meeting Schedule	
Idaho and Wyoming	
May 6, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Boise, ID: Boise Hotel and Conference Center Glenrock, WY: Glenrock Community Recreation Center
May 7, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Kuna, ID: Old Gym Rawlins, WY: The Jeffery Center
May 8, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Murphy, ID: Owyhee County Museum Rock Springs, WY: BLM Rock Springs Field Office
May 9, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Melba, ID: Melba High School Kemmerer, WY: South Lincoln Training and Event Center
Idaho	
May 13, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Twin Falls, ID: Red Lion Canyon Springs Inn
May 14, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Burley, ID: Best Western Inn & Convention Center
May 15, 2013 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Pocatello, ID: Ramada Inn Pocatello
May 14, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	American Falls, ID: American Falls Intermediate School
May 16, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Montpelier, ID: The National OR/CA Trail Center

The Gateway West Transmission Line project is a high priority project of the Obama Administration's Interagency Rapid Response Team for Transmission. The Rapid Response Team for Transmission aims to improve the overall quality and timeliness of electric transmission infrastructure permitting, review, and consultation by the Federal government on both Federal and non-Federal lands.

This project includes amendments of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Land and Resource Management Plans and BLM land use plans. The BLM and the USFS have integrated the land use planning process with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis process for this project. Publication of the notice of availability in the Federal Register on April 26 will initiate a 30-day review and protest period on the BLM and USFS land use plan amendments. Protests must be submitted in writing by May 27, 2013. To submit a protest via regular mail, send to: BLM Director (210), Attention Brenda Williams, P.O. Box 71383, Washington, D.C. 20024-1383. Protests submitted via overnight mail should be sent to: BLM Director (210), Attention: Brenda Williams, 20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM, Washington, D.C. 20003.

Copies of the FEIS are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the following locations in Idaho:

- BLM Idaho State Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise;
- BLM Pocatello Field Office, 4350 Cliffs Drive, Pocatello;

- BLM Idaho Falls District Office, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls;
- BLM Burley Field Office, 15 East 200 South, Burley;
- BLM Twin Falls District Office, 2536 Kimberly Road, Twin Falls;
- BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F St., Shoshone;
- BLM Boise District Office, 3948 Development Ave., Boise;
- BLM Owyhee Field Office, 20 First Ave. W., Marsing;
- Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Montpelier Ranger District, 322 N. Fourth St., Montpelier; and
- Sawtooth National Forest, Minidoka Ranger District, 3650 Overland Ave., Burley.

Copies of the FEIS will also be delivered to public libraries in project-area communities and to interested parties that previously requested a copy. A limited number of copies of the document will be available as supplies last. To request a copy, contact Walt George, Project Manager, BLM Wyoming State Office, P.O. Box 20879, Cheyenne, WY 82003, 307-775-6116.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment or protest, you should be aware that your entire comment or protest – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment or protest to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.

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Wyoming State Office 5353 Yellowstone Road Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

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